

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Secretary of State Clinton Encourages New NATO Strategy

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says NATO is strongest as an alliance when it is united by common purposes and common principles.

“Today we confront challenges that have parallels to the problems that faced the alliance at its inception,” Clinton said February 22.

Clinton said NATO faces a new strategic landscape, new technologies, new adversaries and new ideologies that threaten its security across the globe, not just within its traditional trans-Atlantic boundaries.

“But I believe that the original tenets of NATO’s mission — defending our nations, strengthening trans-Atlantic ties, and fostering European integration — still hold,” she added in a speech February 22 before the opening of a daylong seminar on a new strategic vision for the alliance held at the National Defense University in Washington.

NATO must consolidate the gains that have been made since the alliance was founded April 4, 1949, but also must confront the new nature and origins of the threats it faces today, Clinton said. One of the most complex issues the alliance was beginning to face at the end of the 20th century was operations outside its traditional geographic boundaries.

Some of those operations include NATO ships combating maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa, providing military training to 14,000 Iraqi army troops and supporting the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

“In an interconnected world, we cannot defend our people by crouching behind the geographic boundaries of the alliance,” Clinton said. “Many threats we face have little or no respect for borders.”

“Whether we’re battling piracy, or the menace of terrorism, or the prospect of weapons proliferation, we must be prepared to address new dangers regardless of where they originate,” she added.

NATO has embarked on a series of seminars that are intended to help craft a new strategic concept for the 28-nation alliance. The strategic concept is the core NATO document that defines the trans-Atlantic alliance on its roles, missions, capabilities and strategy for managing security challenges in the 21st century. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is leading a 12-member group of international experts to revise the

strategic concept, which was last revised in 1999.

Since 1999, NATO has begun conducting military operations well beyond its traditional European boundaries, such as in Afghanistan. This has been the subject of considerable debate within the alliance.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told students at Georgetown University in Washington February 22 that NATO often doesn’t get the visibility it should in the United States, but the alliance, created at the beginning of the Cold War, does and should play an essential role in the country’s long-term security. Facing today’s threats and challenges, Rasmussen said, needs the cooperation of like-minded democratic nations.

“The problems of the 21st century can only be solved multilaterally,” he said. “And there is no stronger and more effective framework for that cooperation than NATO.”

To demonstrate the effectiveness of multilateral responses to new challenges, Rasmussen cited examples of cooperation on terrorism, cybersecurity, nuclear proliferation and missile defense as areas where NATO activities have had a significant impact.

Rasmussen also discussed the role of NATO’s partner countries. Though not formal members of the alliance, they form a network that helps NATO with security challenges beyond the traditional areas of the alliance. Clinton said that in the new strategic concept, NATO should examine how to leverage this cooperation to make these relationships more productive.

“In sum, the Atlantic alliance squares the circle of multilateralism and effectiveness,” Rasmussen said. “That is not easy to do. But today more than ever, when we are looking for security in an age of uncertainty, it is precious.”

## EUROPEAN DEFENSE

One area that has created some tension between NATO and the European Union has been security cooperation. Clinton said that in the past the United States had been ambivalent about NATO’s role in security cooperation with the EU. Part of the concern was that many EU countries who were also in NATO would give more support to a common European security and defense initiative and less support for NATO.

Clinton clarified the U.S. position on European security and defense.

“We do not see the EU as a competitor of NATO, but we see a strong Europe as an essential partner with NATO

and with the United States,” Clinton said. “We look forward to working together with the EU as it applies its Common Security and Defense Policy to determine how we can best support one another and the United Nations in addressing security challenges.”

#### NATO AND RUSSIA

Clinton told the international group that the United States wants a cooperative NATO-Russia relationship that produces concrete results and also draws NATO and Russia closer.

“While Russia faces challenges to its security, NATO is not among them,” Clinton said.

Russia has offered a new European Security Treaty and a new NATO-Russia treaty, but Clinton said the United States does not see the need for new treaties.

“We believe discussions of European security should take place within existing forums for European security such as the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] and the NATO-Russia Council,” Clinton said.

Clinton acknowledged that there are “real differences” with Russia, but said the forum for talks on areas of disagreement is the NATO-Russia Council. One example she cited was using the council to encourage Russia to honor its commitments on Georgia. Russia and Georgia fought a brief conflict in August 2008 over breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Clinton added that the NATO-Russia Council is also the place where common interests can be advanced, “including the indivisibility of our common security.”

#### **Official Highlights U.S. Commitment to U.N. Human Rights Council**

*State Department Legal Adviser Harold Koh describes rights review process*

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration is reasserting a U.S. role and focus on human rights worldwide through its re-engagement and work with the United Nations Human Rights Council, says State Department Legal Adviser Harold Hongju Koh.

“Our commitment to the [U.N.] Human Rights Council is long-term,” Koh said, and “working together we can bring about an institution that is much better focused on the challenges to individual human rights in the 21st century.”

Speaking at a February 16 panel sponsored by the

Brookings Institution and The Carter Center, the former assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor in the Clinton administration and dean of the Yale Law School, said the U.S. commitment to the new U.N. council involved “a strategic multilateralism,” consistent with the thinking of President Obama, who has a personal connection to foreign nations such as Kenya and Indonesia. It is also based “on our commitment to the values expressed in our fidelity to the law” both “domestically and internationally,” he added.

The U.N. Human Rights Council’s predecessor, the U.N. Human Rights Commission, was heavily criticized for including members that were undemocratic and systematically violated international human rights.

In 2006, the Human Rights Commission was replaced by a new body, the Human Rights Council. The Bush administration did not seek membership on the council and participated only as an observer with no voting power. The Obama administration’s decision to engage with the council signals a reversal of that policy.

Ted Piccone, Brookings Institution senior fellow and deputy director for foreign policy, said U.S. participation on the U.N. Human Rights Council was a “positive” move that led to successes like “defending the freedom of expression and extending the mandate of the independent expert on Sudan.”

Acknowledging that the new council still had some authoritarian governments as members and that it exhibited “disproportionate attention” to Israel, Koh said the Obama administration was determined to “engage and fight for better outcomes” as a member of the international human rights community.

Koh touched on the importance of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) procedure, which is a mechanism for evaluating human rights failings and progress. The UPR was established by the U.N. General Assembly at the same time the General Assembly created the Human Rights Council.

The UPR is a cooperative process that obligates all 192 U.N. member states to report on human rights conditions in their nations every four years and has “great potential to promote and protect human rights in the darkest corners of the world,” says U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Koh said, “We are very much focused” on the UPR. When it is the U.S. turn to report on its own human rights implementation later in 2010, it is “our goal is to make it a model for how such reports ought to be done. As Secretary [of State Hillary] Clinton has said, holding ourselves accountable ... makes us stronger.”

Noting that the report process “will give us a chance to engage civil society” in the United States, Koh said, “We are doing outreach in about nine different locations around the country ... to reach out and talk about priorities with members of civil society and the human rights community.”

Yuri Dzhibladze, president of the Moscow-based Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, told the Brookings panel the UPR is an effective tool because “many governments take the process quite seriously, due to the media attention and [nongovernmental organization] engagement” it engenders.

Dzhibladze, who was detained by the Russian police during a human rights protest in Moscow in January, said that while the Russian government has cracked down on criticism and dissent, “the UPR has opened up some opportunities.”

Governments, including Russia’s, Dzhibladze said, “come to this [UPR] with serious preparation and high-level delegations that engage in intensive dialogue [with human rights nongovernmental organizations]. Moreover, the Russian Federation has accepted two-thirds of the recommendations [in the UPR], and many of them are important – like addressing inhuman conditions in prisons and detention centers.”

But for the UPR to be successful, the Russian said, it is important that the United States “restore and enhance its presence” in the U.N. Human Rights Council. “We need it back as a key player in the human rights system, to lead by example and be a role model,” Dzhibladze emphasized.

### **Afghan Operation Emphasizes Prevention of Civilian Casualties**

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The military and civilian operations in Afghanistan’s central Helmand province have placed a priority on protecting the civilian population and delivering stability and services to them, rather than the goal of killing Taliban insurgent forces that have been in control of the area, Obama administration officials say.

Despite ongoing resistance in the Nad Ali district and the town of Marjah, the Defense Department’s undersecretary for policy, Michelle Flournoy, told U.S. senators she is “cautiously optimistic” about the direction of the new Afghan and international effort.

“This is a work in progress. But we are seeing conditions begin to develop that we believe will ultimately be

necessary for success,” Flournoy told the Senate Armed Services Committee February 22. “And for the first time, we believe we have the right mission, the right strategy, the right leadership and the right level of resources in support of the mission.”

Operation Moshtarak, a word that means “together” in Dari and Pashto, was planned by Afghan security forces and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan with the goal of clearing areas of Taliban fighters, extending the reach of the local and national Afghan governments, and providing the civilian population with services such as health care and education and reassuring them that the authority of the Afghan government is there to stay.

“This really is the first large-scale effort to fundamentally change how we are doing business,” Flournoy said, emphasizing that the top priority is protecting the civilian population while working closely with Afghan partners to ensure the Afghan government can hold the area as they build civilian services and economic development.

Many Afghans are eager to see development and responsive governance, but need assistance and resources to make that happen. With the beginning of Operation Moshtarak, “I think they see this as an opportunity to move down the road toward achieving that,” she said.

Before the operation began February 13, Afghan and ISAF representatives held multiple shuras, or traditional meetings of elders, in local communities, which Flournoy said allowed civilians to “have real buy-in into the operation.”

The shuras focused on the situation on the ground, “whether they wanted their area to be cleared, whether they wanted to be rid of the Taliban, whether they wanted Afghan and coalition forces to come in,” as well as what the outcome might look like and determining if they were “prepared for the risk that would be involved.”

As a result, “I think the vast majority of them became very supportive,” she said, “but they were also very clear that they wanted not just a clearing; they wanted the hold and the build, and they wanted legitimate and responsive governance at the end of the day when it was all over.”

### **MILITARY APOLOGIZES FOR CIVILIAN CASUALTIES**

Flournoy said with the emphasis on avoiding civilian casualties, the percentage caused by coalition actions “has dropped substantially,” which has improved both optimism and confidence that the Afghan and international forces will prevail over the Taliban.

However, a mistaken February 22 attack on a civilian



convoy killed 27 people, and prompted a February 23 video apology by ISAF commander General Stanley McChrystal to the Afghan people in Dari and Pashto.

"I have instituted a thorough investigation to prevent this from happening again," McChrystal said. "I pledge to strengthen our efforts to regain your trust to build a brighter future for all Afghans. Most importantly, I express my deepest, heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families. We all share in their grief and will keep them in our thoughts and prayers."

In his remarks to the Senate committee, Marine Corps Lieutenant General John Paxton Jr., who directs operations for the U.S. military's Joint Staff, said there have been "isolated incidents of regrettable civilian casualties," and he said that in some cases "we have seen the Taliban use the civilians as human shields."

The coalition troops have been operating under rules of engagement that are designed to prevent civilian casualties, and McChrystal has given his subordinate commanders in the field the authority to exercise their judgment in the delicate balance between protecting civilians while also protecting their troops from undue risk, Paxton said.

"Right now, our two largest points are to separate the insurgents from the population, and then to demonstrate our resolve and our commitment to stay ... so that we can gain credibility with the people of Afghanistan," he said.

With the delivery of the goods and services they seek, the population will not feel that "they owe allegiance to a shadow government who provides something that the local government cannot," he said.

Already, he said, in some areas that have been cleared of Taliban forces, markets and bazaars have reopened, and civilians have cooperated with coalition forces by identifying the location of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which the Taliban have used as their primary weapon against the security forces.

Civilian cooperation can play a role in persuading some Taliban fighters to participate in rehabilitation efforts led by the Afghan government, he said.

"If the population can demonstrate a resilience and an agreement to work with the Afghan security forces, then those who have thrown down their arms and left may be faced with two opportunities of either retreating further or starting to think about reconciliation, which is where we want to go," Paxton said.

## **State's Carson Urges Nigerian Election Reform, Credible 2011 Vote**

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The top U.S. diplomat to Africa says he has stressed to Nigerian leaders the importance of a credible 2011 election and urged the country to make electoral reform one of its highest priorities to allow a peaceful transition in line with democratic principles.

In his February 23 prepared testimony to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson said he met with acting President Goodluck Jonathan during his visit to the country earlier in February. Carson said Jonathan's designation as acting president by the Nigerian National Assembly in light of President Umaru Yar'Adua's continuing medical absence has demonstrated Nigeria's resolve "to find a path forward consistent with its constitution and in line with democratic principles" despite the political vacuum.

"We commend the commitment of all elements of Nigerian society to constitutional process and the rule of law," Carson said. "We will continue to support the Nigerian people as they work through their democratic institutions to resolve the challenges facing their great nation."

The assistant secretary said that while in Nigeria, he met with a broad spectrum of political, religious and civil society leaders, and discussed improvements on governance, efforts against corruption, violent extremism, as well as Nigeria's national elections, which are scheduled for April 2011.

The 2011 vote "must be credible," Carson said. Nigeria "cannot afford a repeat" of its 2007 elections, which he said were "marred by poor organization, widespread fraud and numerous incidents of voter intimidation and violence resulting in the deaths of more than 300 people."

Elections held February 6 in Nigeria's Anambra state, while deemed credible, suffered from "poor logistics and administration," with only a 16 percent voter turnout, Carson said.

"This is one area where the Independent National Electoral Commission, which is in need of improved leadership, must do better," he said.

The United States has been supporting electoral reform in the country by printing out Electoral Reform Commission recommendations for distribution by Nigerian organizations, as well as by organizing symposiums, seminars and other activities on the issue.

"We are prepared to provide technical assistance to Nigeria's election commission provided they demonstrate a willingness to fulfill their primary role of strengthening election administration," Carson said.

Along with encouraging electoral reform, Carson warned that "endemic corruption" has been a major factor in preventing U.S. private-sector investment, and that poor governance has played an even greater role in the disconnect between the country's wealth in natural resources, as Africa's largest oil producer, and the poverty of its people.

"There can be little progress in reducing child mortality, fighting poverty, creating jobs and improving the business climate without improved governance," he said.

Carson said Nigerians have expressed dissatisfaction at being included on the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's "Countries of Interest" list in the wake of violence within its borders and the attempt by a Nigerian national to detonate a bomb on board a U.S.-bound jet on December 25, 2009.

"Nigerians perceive this as collective punishment for the actions of a wayward son, when in fact they shared our outrage at the attack and have been providing assistance to the ongoing investigation," he said.

"Let me be clear, our friendship and relationship with Nigeria is strong and continues to be based on a wide range of important bilateral issues," Carson said.

Condemning the "chronic politically motivated, inter-religious violence" in the Nigerian state of Plateau, Carson urged all sides to "address the hostility between religious and ethnic groups and bring perpetrators of such acts to justice."

The tensions in northern Nigeria "have religious overtones and are perceived by outsiders as fighting between Christians and Muslims," he said. But "the real conflict is one of politics," and he urged Nigerian political leaders to recognize this and work with national religious leaders to promote a dialogue to peacefully resolve the issues.

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